

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, &c.—*continued*.

Purchase of land (Native land),—	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Kumutoto Scenic Reserve	259	1	11			
Pukemiro Scenic Reserve	57	1	10			
Tongoio Falls Scenic Reserve	19	15	7			
Wairua Falls Scenic Reserve	10	16	10			
	346	16	2			
Credit—Part purchase-money for Kumutoto Scenic Reserve unclaimed ..	2	10	0			
				344	6	2
Administration of reserves (including fencing)				1,158	16	10
Salaries—Inspector and Surveyor, £300; Secretary, £25				325	0	0
Surveys, valuations, and incidental expenses				2,603	10	8
Total				£5,775	13	6

APPENDIX B.

REPORT BY THE INSPECTOR OF SCENIC RESERVES.

In the early part of last year I was engaged in the supervision of the completion of the scenic surveys along the Main Trunk line. In the winter months most of my time was taken up in the preparation of maps of parts of Crown lands along the Main Trunk line that are to be set apart for scenery-preservation. Along the railway there remain to be taken a few small pieces of Native land between Turangarere and Mangaweka, and another small piece at Waimarino Station. There are also some pieces of Crown lands along the railway between Waimarino and Kakahi that have yet to be proclaimed as scenic reserves. In addition to my field inspections, I surveyed the Pipinui Falls Reserve and the Pahiutua Hill, besides contributing sundry reports on special matters.

In the spring and summer I resumed field-work and inspected most of the scenic reserves in the Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Marlborough Districts—thirty-nine reserves, with an area of 12,948 acres. Three or four in the northern end of Taranaki and one near the East Cape I had to omit, as when in the district the rivers were so flooded that access was cut off.

There remain to be inspected the reserves in Nelson, Southland, and Westland.

In February, in conjunction with Mr. Y. Booker, I started the surveys of the pieces of Native land proposed as reserves along the Wanganui River. By June all the lands advisable to be taken between Pipiriki and Wanganui will have been surveyed off. The country is some of the roughest in the North Island, and the bush is a dense tangle of vines, so surveying operations are consequently slow.

As the surveys of these reserves will all be utilised in the subdivision of the Native blocks, it seems only fair that the latter should bear a proportion of the cost of survey.

In seven cases it was found that the bush had been felled on reserves proposed by the Scenery Preservation Board, and in four cases the bush had been cleared or partly cleared on land that had been actually surveyed two years ago for preservation.

Condition of Reserves.—On the whole, the condition of the reserves examined last year was satisfactory. This was especially the case in the Taranaki District, where we are fortunate in having two gentlemen like Mr. W. H. Skinner and Mr. F. Carrington, who devote a good deal of their leisure time to the guardianship of the reserves near New Plymouth. In this town a keen interest in the reserves is also shown by many private people, and the local beautifying society has even raised funds for the fencing of some of the reserves.

The reserves in the Marlborough District are mostly around the Sounds, and are generally well preserved. In one or two instances adjoining settlers' fires had spread into the reserves and done some damage, and damage is still being done by herds of wild goats and incursions of tame cattle. Goats are most destructive, as they eat not only shrubs, but even kill trees as large as the houhou by eating off the bark from the trunk. There is a Ranger looking after the safety of the reserves in Queen Charlotte Sound, but there is no one supervising the many beautiful spots in Pelorus Sound.

The beauty of these sounds is entirely dependent on the existence of the native bush. The sounds are already a great pleasure and health resort and will some day become much more so, and it is therefore advisable that special attention should be given to their protection. Having seen all the beautiful harbours of the world, I venture to say that in none of them is a more beautiful view displayed than that from the summit of Mount Stoke.

What few reserves there are in the Hawke's Bay District are (excepting a small one near Woodville and another near Ormondville, both of which are spoiled—the latter being in grass) in good order. The reserve at Aorangi Mountain (Poverty Bay) is very fine, and of great interest from the point of view of the naturalist; but for many years it is likely to remain difficult of access. Mr. T. Sherwood, who has a station adjoining the reserve, is kindly acting as honorary Ranger. He is greatly interested in natural history, and makes a most desirable guardian. As regards this Hawke's Bay District (over 6,000,000 acres in extent) it is most lamentable how little of the indigenous forest has been reserved for permanent preservation.

Noxious Weeds.—In some of the reserves near New Plymouth blackberries have become rather a serious pest, and unremitting attention will be required to keep them in check. The reserves further out are practically clean. Blackberries are rather bad on the Tongoio Falls Reserve, near Napier,